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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/158,549	09/22/1998	JOHN S. HENDRICKS	5515	4086

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EXAMINER

BROWN, RUEBEN M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2611

DATE MAILED: 02/27/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 9/12/05 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

3. Claims 1 & 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed

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invention. The instant claims 1 & 16, recite, “whereby digital data, including the electronic mail is transferred from the set top terminal for processing and the processed electronic mail is passed to the set to terminal for display” and “the hardware upgrade comprising, ...processing the electronic mail to produce processed electronic mail”, examiner does not find explicit written description in the specification filed 12/29/1992, 07/991,074, for the instant subject matter.

It is pointed out that in applicant’s response, filed 9/21/2005, applicant discusses that the current amendments to claims 1 & 16, are meant to overcome the rejections of prior art references Florin (filed, 6/22/93) and Handelman (filed, 9/15/93). Therefore there is no need to analyze whether the current amendments are found in the present specification (09/158,549) which is CIP of the 07/991,704 application, filed 12/9/1992. Thus, examiner’s analysis is limited to whether the 07/991,704 application contains a written description that supports the subject matter recited in the present claims 1 & 16. For the same reasons cited in the above rejection, examiner maintains that the 07/991,704 does not enable the claimed subject matter as cited by the examiner.

In a discussion with applicant’s representative on 2/16/06, Mr. Elsie asserted that page 25, lines 19-22 thru page 26, lines 1-7, supports that instant subject matter. However, examiner points out that cited portion of specification merely teaches that the network controller 214 acts a central computer and provides electronic mail service to the set top terminal. Lines 5-7 of page 26 reads, “These interactive features are further described below with the interactive services level B menu and the set top terminal hardware upgrade level B interactive unit”. First of all, it is

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pointed out that the specification does not explicitly mention electronic mail services anywhere else other than as cited on page 25. Thus, the “described below”, phrase does not explicitly pertain to “electronic mail”. Secondly, even if the phrase of page 26, lines 5-7 could be construed to read that the “interactive features”, including electronic mail are accessed using the interactive service level B menu and because of the upgrade level B interactive unit, that written description still does not explicitly state that the upgrade level B interactive unit receives and processes the electronic mail and passes the instant electronic mail back to the set top terminal for display.

Mr. Elsie also pointed o pages 54, lines 15-22 thru page 55, lines 1-7 as supporting the claimed subject matter, since that portion discusses that the upgrade level B interactive unit “allows access to online data base services such as home shopping, airline reservations, news, financial services, classified advertising, home banking and interactive teletext services”. However, again examiner points out that the instant disclosure still does not explicitly state electronic mail is received and processed by the upgrade level B interactive unit.

4. Claims 1 & 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. In particular, in claims 1 & 16, the following subject matter is not enabled by the specification; “whereby digital data,

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including the electronic mail is transferred from the set top terminal for processing and the processed electronic mail is passed to the set to terminal for display” and “the hardware upgrade comprising, ...processing the electronic mail to produce processed electronic mail”.

As discussed above, on page 9 of the applicant's response, filed 9/21/2005, applicant discusses that the amendments to claims 1 & 16, are meant to overcome the rejections of prior art references Florin (filed, 6/22/93) and Handelsman (filed, 9/15/93). Therefore there is no need to analyze whether the current amendments are found in the present specification (09/158,549), which is CIP of the 07/991,704 application, filed 12/9/1992. Thus, examiner's analysis is limited to whether the 07/991,704 application contains a written description that supports the subject matter recited in the present claims 1 & 16.

For the same reasons cited in the above written description rejection, examiner maintains that the 07/991,704 does not enable the claimed subject matter as cited by the examiner.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments with respect to the claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. As discussed in the 112 rejections above, examiner has not found support in the 07/991,074 application for the above amendments. Thus, the filing date of the present application, 12/2/1993 is considered the effective filing data of the current

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amended subject matter. In light of the above discussion, Florin & Handelman are still considered prior art to the presently claimed subject matter.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 1-2, 4-6, 16-17, 19-21 & 43-45 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kauffman, (U.S. Pat # 5,003,591), in view of Handelman, (U.S. Pat # 5,715,315) & Lett, (U.S. Pat # 5,657,414).

Considering claim 1, regarding the amended claimed hardware upgrade for enhancing the functionality of a set top terminal, (STT) in a TV delivery system, such that each STT is adapted to receive electronic mail, Kauffman discloses an interactive two-way CATV system that enables a subscriber to transmit/receive e-mail services at a set top converter 40, i.e. STT, see Kauffman Fig. 1 & col. 8, lines 19-32. Moreover, the converter 40 of Kauffman includes a microprocessor 50, which reads on the claimed microprocessor; see Fig. 2 & col. 6, lines 35-60.

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As for the hardware upgrade comprising an interface for providing an electrical connection to the STT, whereby the e-mail is transferred from the STT for processing and the processed e-mail is passed to the STT for display, Kauffman does not discuss a separate hardware unit for processing of the e-mail services.

However, the disclosure of Handelman teaches that e-mail data may be transmitted from the CATV interface unit 18 to an external memory unit 38, (Fig. 2; col. 6, lines 24-26). E-mail data then may be retrieved from external memory unit 38 passed through the STT and displayed on the TV receiver, col. 6, lines 38-45. It would have been obvious for one ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Kauffman with the teachings of Handelman, at least for the desirable advantage of making more memory available through the external memory unit.

Thus the amended claimed feature of, 'whereby digital data, including electronic mail is transferred from the STT for processing and the processed electronic mail is passed to the STT for display', reads on Handelman. Handelman teaches passing compressed electronic mail at least to an external memory card, which reads on the claimed 'processing'.

As for the claimed at least one microprocessor connected to the interface for processing the e-mail to produce processed e-mail, Handelman does not show that the memory card includes a CPU. Nevertheless, Lett discloses a subscriber terminal 40 that includes an expansion card 138 that extends the capability of the subscriber terminal 40 by operating various additional

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processes, col. 8, lines 54-63. Lett goes on to teach that these expansion cards 138 include a microprocessor, which reads on the claimed subject matter; also see col. 8, lines 55-63.

It would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made, to modify Kauffman with the feature of placing a microprocessor, at least for the desirable advantage of more independent modular systems, as taught by Lett, col. 8, lines 61-63.

Regarding the newly added feature of the 'microprocessor of the hardware upgrade being capable of communication with the microprocessor of the set top converter', Lett teaches that the microprocessor 128 and secure microprocessor 136 of the subscriber terminal 40 communicates with the expansion card 138, which includes its own microprocessor and/or memory, via memory bus 141 and secure memory bus 143, respectively; see col. 8, lines 11-63.

Considering claims 2 & 17, Handelman discloses that video data may be transmitted to the CATV unit 18 in MPEG format, which reads on digital video; see col. 6, lines 15-21.

Considering claims 4 & 19, the instant claim calls for subscriber input, including textual information that is used to produce the processed e-mail for display. Kauffman clearly discusses that the subscriber is enabled to "send and receive e-mail messages", which requires textual input, see col. 8, lines 19-30. Also, Handelman discuss that a remote control is used to select an information display channel or non-CATV data display option. Handelman also teaches that the STT may be connected to a keyboard, thereby enabling the input of textual information.

Considering claims 5 & 20, Handelman (col. 1, lines 61-67) discloses interfacing with on-line databases, interactive services and message services and using a telephone modem.

Considering claims 6 & 21, the claimed memory for storing the processed e-mail is met by the external memory unit 38 or internal memory unit 36 of Handelman; see Fig. 2, also see Lett, col. 8, lines 45-65, which teaches that the expansion card 138 includes memory.

Considering claim 16, the claimed method for enhancing the functionality of a STT comprises steps that correspond with subject matter mentioned above in the rejection of claim 1, and is likewise treated.

Considering claim 43, the claimed feature of 'textual interactivity', Handelman teaches that the subscriber may have input to the system using a keyboard 130, which reads on 'textual interactivity', see col. 8, lines 46-50. As for the claimed 'overlay menus', Kauffman discusses the use of an on-screen display, but does not explicitly discuss an overlay screen.

Considering claim 44, Lett teaches that the expansion card 138 extends the capability of the subscriber terminal 40, but does not explicitly state the expansion card may coordinate reception of TV programs and interact with the upstream data transmitter. Nevertheless, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made, would have readily recognized the benefit of placing some of the tuning and upstream functionality on an expansion card. It would

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have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made, to modify the combination of Lett to provide additional features such as tuning to the expansion card, at least for the desirable improvement of enabling multiple channels to be tuned concurrently and/or providing redundancy of tuning and upstream hardware.

Considering claim 45, the claimed elements of a hardware upgrade for a STT in a TV program delivery system that correspond with subject matter mentioned above in the rejection of claims 1 & 16, are likewise analyzed. As for the additional claimed 'modem for accessing an online service outside of the TV program delivery system and for receiving electronic mail from the online service', Handelman teaches that the modem 119 may provide e-mail services, col. 8, lines 1-26.

As for the additionally claimed, 'memory for storing programming instructions that enable a subscriber to engage in textual interactivity with the processing of the electronic mail', Lett teaches that the expansion card 138 may include "additional program or data memory". Thus the combination of Handelman (which teaches that the external memory 38, at least stores e-mail data, and that using keyboard 130, the subscriber has textual interactivity with the e-mail service) and Lett, reads on the claimed subject matter.

The further claimed, 'interface for providing an electrical connection between the STT and the hardware upgrade, and for transferring the processed electronic mail from the hardware upgrade to the STT for display', is inherent in Handelman.

Conclusion

8. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

A) Baran Discloses a two-way CATV system that supports e-mail services. Also discloses the user having textual interactivity with the e-mail service, see col. 5, lines 35-41.

B) Kauffman Discloses a CATV system that supports e-mail messaging. Further discusses the subscriber textually interacting with the e-mail messages., see col.

Any response to this action should be mailed to:

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Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450
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or faxed to:

(571) 273-8300, (for formal communications intended for entry)

Or:

(571) 273-7290 (for informal or draft communications, please label
"PROPOSED" or "DRAFT")

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Reuben M. Brown M. Brown whose telephone number is (571) 272-7290. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F(8:30-6:00), First Friday off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Christopher Grant can be reached on (571) 272-7294. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273-8300 for regular communications and After Final communications.

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Reuben M. Brown

Reuben Brown
REUBEN BROWN
PATENT EXAMINER